

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 585

PS 017 274

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TITLE Increasing Motivation in Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Graders through Staff Development Emphasizing Positive Classroom Techniques.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 101p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attribution Theory; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Failure; Feedback; Helplessness; Inservice Teacher Education; *Instructional Development; Intermediate Grades; *Learning Motivation; Personality Traits; Reinforcement; Rewards; *Student Improvement; *Student Motivation; Success; *Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

Because intermediate grade students were not working up to their potential, a coordinator of elementary school instruction implemented a practicum to increase students' motivation. In-service meetings were held with six intermediate grade teachers from each of two schools for the purpose of planning techniques and devising activities for increasing the motivation of students. Teacher instruction focused on success- and failure-oriented personalities, learned helplessness, ways to renew student motivation, attribution theory, rewards, constructive feedback, and reinforcement theory. Practicum goals were to: (1) assist teachers in planning activities that would improve student motivation and increase students' drive to work up to their potential; (2) enable children to put forth the effort that would allow them to achieve at their expected level; and (3) improve students' attendance, preparation, and self-discipline. To attain these goals, a staff development program was implemented. This program included research-based techniques and activities designed to improve instructional and motivation strategies used in the classroom. Evaluation data indicated that a staff development program designed to assist teachers in strengthening student motivation does increase students' ability to succeed in school. Related materials are appended. (RH)

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Center for the
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Ed.D. Program

Increasing Motivation in Fourth,
Fifth, and Sixth Graders Through
Staff Development Emphasizing
Positive Classroom Techniques

by

Judith L. Foster

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Increasing Motivation
in Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Graders
Through Staff Development
Emphasizing Positive Classroom Techniques

by

Judith L. Foster
Cluster XXIV

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1988

PS 017274

Practicum Approval Sheet

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Approved:

March 5, 1988

Date of Final Approval
of Report

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Abstract

Increasing Motivation in Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Graders Through Staff Development Emphasizing Positive Classroom Techniques. Foster, Judith L., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Elementary Education/Intermediate Grades/Motivation/Underachievement/Student Apathy/Teacher Effectiveness

This practicum addressed the problem of intermediate grade students who were not working up to their potential. The lack of motivation to achieve in school often resulted in students who were unsuccessful at their assigned grade level. They received unsatisfactory grades on their report cards, scored poorly on various types of tests, had poor school attendance and often came unprepared to class. The literature review provided valuable insight into the importance of student motivation in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. It also offered a variety of techniques that could enhance a teacher's effectiveness in attempting to prompt her students to exert more effort toward their schoolwork.

The writer's goals were: (1) to assist the teachers in planning activities that would improve student motivation, and increase student drive to work up to potential; (2) to enable the children to put forth the effort that would allow them to achieve at their expected level; (3) to improve the grades' attendance, preparation and self-discipline of the students, and to accept this improvement as evidence of strengthened self-concepts. In addressing these goals, the writer implemented a staff development program planned with research based techniques and activities which were designed to improve instructional and motivational strategies used in the classroom. Teachers were expected to use the suggestions in their classes during the week and give feedback at the next weekly meeting.

All of the teachers and their classes that participated in the program met the objectives of the practicum. Results indicated that a staff development program designed to assist teachers in strengthening student motivation does enable students to achieve a higher degree of success in school.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Description of Community

This practicum took place in a subdistrict of a large metropolitan school system. The school system is located in the midwestern United States. The population of the city served by this school system is approximately 3,000,000 people. Many ethnic backgrounds are represented in the city, and thus in the school system.

In the beginning, people came from Northern and Western Europe to settle in this city. The early settlers came first from Ireland, then from Germany, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries. Later, the Southern and Eastern Europeans began to come to this area. Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, and Greece were represented in the various communities. Asians, Blacks, and Latin Americans were also a part of the early history.

Today, as in other large metropolitan areas, many of the people mentioned above have moved away. For example, many families of Dutch descent have moved to one of the south suburbs. Most of the old

Scandinavian neighborhoods have also disappeared, as have those of the Italians.

However, the Polish and Irish populations remain quite large. The Lithuanians, too, have settled in to stay. The Asians, Greeks, and others have carved out their communities. Blacks and Hispanics now make up the majority of people living within the city limits.

Because the school system serves such a large area with a vast population, it has been divided into 20 elementary subdistricts and three high school subdistricts. Each of these smaller districts is headed by a District Superintendent who works with, and for, the Superintendent of Schools. Each District Superintendent has a staff of district coordinators who work within that district in order to improve the educational environment.

This writer works as a district coordinator in one of the elementary district offices. The district consists of 20 schools made up of pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. These schools house 726 teachers and 12,820 students.

Within its boundaries, the district includes a historic and diverse area. Architectural and cultural landmarks attest to its historic significance. Many homes and buildings in this district have been granted

historic landmark status. Other old homes are being restored and occupied by middle income families.

However, 59.5% of the families that live in the district are categorized as low socioeconomic. Many of these families live in public housing and are unemployed.

The racial/ethnic background of the students represented in this district are as follows: White -- 12.5%, Black - 71.5%, Asian -- 5.6%, and Hispanic -- 10.4%. Of these, 5.9% speak limited English. Nine of the district's schools are integrated. Eleven are classified as racially isolated.

The racial/ethnic background of the teachers represented in this district are as follows: White -- 30.5%, Black -- 60.6%, Asian -- 3.5%, and Hispanic -- 5.4%. Of these 85% are certified, experienced teachers, while 15% are temporary or have substitute status.

Writer's Role and Responsibilities

The writer has spent all of her 20 years of teaching in this school system. After obtaining a bachelors degree in Political Science, she spent the first few years of her career teaching history to seventh and eighth graders.

Realizing the amount of frustration that her students experienced due to their poor reading skills, she began exploring ways to assist them in overcoming these handicaps. This interest led to a masters degree in Reading. She spent the next several years teaching remedial reading to intermediate and upper-grade students.

In 1983 this writer was awarded a service award for her work with the children and the staff of the school where she was employed. Shortly thereafter she left the school to accept the position of district instructional coordinator.

As instructional coordinator she is responsible to the District Superintendent, but works closely with the principals and the teachers. Her role is that of resource person, advisor, instructor, and coordinator of the instructional program within the District. She is expected to participate in citywide inservices and to plan and conduct inservice sessions within the district schools. In addition, she assists in monitoring and evaluating activities for the academic programs in close cooperation with the Department of Curriculum.

In 1987 the writer was again given an outstanding service award. This award was presented by the District Educational Council in recognition of her work with the teachers and principals of the district.

CHAPTER II

Study of the Problem

Description of the Problem Situation

Intermediate grade children lacked the necessary drive that it took to work up to their potential. They began their school years excited and enthusiastic. This feeling usually prevailed through the first through third grades. Through observation, one could see the primary children doing their schoolwork, listening to the teacher, and participating in the activities. At the end of the day they filled their bookbags eager to show their parents what they learned in school.

However, this positive attitude soon began to fade for many of our children. By the time they reached the middle or intermediate grades their enthusiasm had dimmed, and many were no longer participating in classroom activities as eagerly as they once did. They no longer seemed to be motivated.

It had been noted over the years by this writer, that the students who started out liking school and wanting to learn, soon began to fall behind or to do just enough to get by. They allowed other interests

to capture their attention such as television or sports. School no longer seemed to be a priority.

Achievement of these middle grade students was effected when the children no longer exhibited much interest in academic activities. They began coming to class unprepared. It did not worry them to lose their pencils, forget their paper, or to leave a textbook at home. Often students arrived at school with incomplete homework assignments. These observations were the result of the writer's many discussions with other professionals, as well as personal experiences.

Understandably, many factors can interfere with a child's study habits at home. Too often, however, the child avoids doing his homework even when he has a quiet place to study, and an interested parent who queries him about his school responsibilities. How many tales have been told about the parent who asked the child what he did in school that day, or what he had for homework, only to be given the answer, "Nothing."

Eventually, this lack of concern leads to poor school work and poor test scores. Low grades lead to frustration and defeatism which often result in poor attendance. The drive to come to school has long

since faded. It is human nature to want to avoid that which we do not do well.

Children who are not successful in school are often the same children who are poorly disciplined. Many teachers had lamented this fact, but a comparison of students' conduct cards and report cards also supported this belief.

Previous attempts to improve this situation had been sporadic or isolated within various classrooms across the district. Often these attempts had stressed the negative such as retention, punishment, withholding of privileges, etc. . . . These efforts had not done much to alleviate the situation.

This writer chose to address the lack of motivation in a more concerted manner. She decided to work through the problem by concentrating her efforts in the intermediate departments of two of the district schools. Both of these schools adequately represented the racial and economical makeup of the district.

Through early morning inservices, the writer worked with six intermediate teachers in each of the two schools, planning techniques and devising activities that were geared to increase the motivation of the participating students.

By solving, or at least decreasing the problem, the teachers should have begun to see students who were better prepared for class. They would witness children who had done all or part of their homework. These students would begin to get better grades on teacher-made tests, which would enable them to have a more positive outlook toward school. Liking school would increase the chance that the student would not want to be absent, and therefore, attendance was expected to improve.

Students, who were successful in school and eager to attend, were more likely to be self-disciplined. The writer's past experience had shown her that it was most often the unsuccessful student who was also the discipline problem. Successful students were more likely to cooperate with the teachers and with each other. This would improve the classroom environment considerably.

Briefly stated then, the problem was that many students in the middle grades within the district lacked the motivation to apply themselves. There was a need to replace the indifferent and irresponsible attitude found in many intermediate grades with the kind of enthusiasm and motivation exhibited in the

primary grades if these students were to begin to work up to their potential.

Documentation on the Problem

The proof that this problem existed could be found in several different sources. Due to the fact that two specific schools were used as representative samples of the district, data related to the problem was drawn from these two schools. There were 301 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade participating students in 12 classrooms. Of these students, 27% received unsatisfactory grades in two or more major subject areas on their last report card (see Appendix A). The teachers' grade books showed that 30% of the participating students had scored poorly on teacher-made tests (see Appendix B).

The writer questioned several of the teachers at the two participating schools to gain insight into what, if anything, was being done to motivate the students to put more effort into their studies. These informal discussions took place while visiting the schools in order to gather the necessary data for this practicum.

The primary teachers, who knew these children in their earlier school years, voiced the opinion that

they are more patient than other teachers, and gave more individual guidance to the children. They admit that primary teachers acquire these characteristics through necessity, however, they strongly believe that patience and guidance help to keep the children on track.

Parents, the teachers explained, are still giving their primary children the majority of their attention. They look closely at the children's work and listen as they talk about school. Eventually, younger siblings are born and the majority of the attention no longer goes to the children in question as they move into the intermediate grades.

Intermediate teachers acknowledged the fact that they do not coddle their students. They believe that a child in this age group should be able to function more independently than before and should not demand the same attention as a primary child. However, it was the writer's opinion that because these children were in regular classrooms, and therefore assumed to have average intelligence, much more could be done to motivate the students in order to improve their report card and test grades.

Attendance and conduct also seemed to be poor among these intermediate children. School

registration cards from the 12 classrooms indicated that 9% of the students were absent 20% or more of the school year; 6% of the students were absent approximately 15% of the time, and 15% of the students were absent 10% of the time. When these figures are combined, it is apparent that 30% of these intermediate students have excessive absences. A closer look revealed that another 30% of the students had sporadic absences (see Appendix C). This school system sets a citywide goal of 95% attendance for all of its teachers and students. Therefore, absences of 20%, 15%, and 10% are below the acceptable standards for this system.

An examination of conduct cards revealed that 65 of the 301 students, or 22%, had been referred to the principal's office for poor discipline at least once during the school year (see Appendix D). Teacher judgment determined when it became necessary to refer a student to the principal. Students usually committed several minor offenses before being sent to the principal, and these offenses did not show up on the conduct cards. Therefore, one could conclude that if 22% of the students had poor enough conduct to require a visit to the principal, many more engaged in minor offenses within the classrooms.

The problem also became evident as children continued to arrive at school unprepared. They forgot their books, lost their pencils, and ran out of paper. Their homework was often incomplete. These actions, as frequently expressed by the teachers, made it difficult to move ahead in the lesson.

Research (Hiebert & Winograd, 1984; Willig, Harnisch, Hill & Maehr, 1983) showed that teachers were often not aware of the benefit that could be derived from making use of motivational techniques in their classroom. Consequently, they omitted using these techniques and then wondered why the students lost interest in learning.

Analysis of the Problem

The problem of students lacking the motivation to work up to their potential seemed to have several causes involving both the students and the teachers. Middle grade students had, in many cases, lost the self-confidence that they may have once had. They have had time to experience failure and to realize that everything did not always work out as they might have wanted it to. Each time a student failed at an assignment or was unsuccessful at an attempt to complete a classroom activity, his self-belief was

diminished. If the student was not given the opportunity to alleviate the sense of failure, or to experience the feeling of success, he may not have been motivated to continue making an effort. Through conversations and observations, the writer concluded that this was a primary cause of the lack of motivation in many children.

When these children began to fail, they often attributed it to the level of difficulty of the learning situation. If they were allowed to continue to believe that the work was too hard, they ceased to attempt or to complete the assignments. This appeared to be the case with many of the intermediate students. Their teachers believed that they had the potential to do the level of work assigned to them, yet the students were not taking the responsibility necessary to meet with success.

Teachers, on the other hand, were also causing or contributing to this problem. Many of them, through years of frustration, admitted that they no longer tried to get the most out of their students. They did not believe that the students would do their best. Because of this lack of belief, many of them did not set high enough standards. Again, conversations and observations had shown the writer that the teachers

were more apt to water down or shorten the assignments in an effort to move the students through the grade. They had begun to make mediocrity an acceptable standard.

This writer had also found that the teachers often did not have clearly set goals for their students. When this was the case, they tended to assign work that would keep the students busy, or they moved the children through the textbooks with little sense of accomplishment for them or their students.

By using this method of teaching, the excitement of learning became diminished. The children were not enthused about learning, nor were the teachers excited about teaching.

Discussions in class frequently entailed various students taking turns at espousing the answers that they thought might have been correct. Teachers did not give the students a chance to explore why they chose their answers. Nor were they given the opportunity to voice their opinion and defend it. Often the same students took part in class discussions, while the rest of the class sat back and tuned out.

If a student did succeed on an assignment or a task, he was often not rewarded or recognized. A

grade of "B" on a paper did not help the student to understand what part of the paper was good and what part needed to be improved. Papers that were withheld until the student forgot about them could have seriously affected the student's desire to stay on the right track or to do better.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Many professionals have written about the problems involving motivation. They have explored the various phases of motivation and cited a variety of suggestions to reduce the problems related to these phases.

Most teachers accept the premise that learning cannot occur without motivation (Mosley & Smith, 1982).

One aim of this review was to help clarify ways to facilitate student motivation. There is increasing evidence that classroom teachers do realize that difficulties with student motivation relate directly to problems of discipline and control (Lufler, 1978). Teachers have also expressed the need to expand and vary their motivation techniques to accommodate increasingly diverse classroom populations (King-Stoops & Meier, 1978).

It is understood that many variables effect learning. Student ability, home environment, quality of instruction, type of task, are some of the variables that must be understood before a person's motivation can be regarded as significantly important to the learning situation. There is evidence that motivation is consistently, positively related to educational achievement (Uguroglu & Wolberg, 1979).

If we understand the connection between learning and motivation, we can appreciate the daily difficulty in the teaching process. We can begin to reject student "laziness" or apathy as simplistic excuses for why children are not learning or for unsuccessful teaching (Lytle, 1980).

Even though many different theoretical positions, such as those of Skinner or Maslow, explain motivation, in many cases they contain a significant amount of overlap or similarity. The psychologists, who do most of the writing and research on theories of motivation, often disagree in their basic assumptions concerning what motivation is and how influential it can be. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, the author chose not to concentrate on the theoretical research, but to extract from the research the most productive and useful findings for day-to-day teaching.

The components of this paper consist of research that focused, in part, on the role of the student. What impact does the student's self-concept have on motivation? To what do students attribute their successes or failures?

The writer also reviewed the findings on the role of the teacher as it was related to motivation. Teacher expectations, goals, use of feedback, and reinforcement were examined.

A student's success in school is strongly affected by his or her self-concept. Many researchers believe that some students develop success-oriented personalities whereas others develop failure-oriented personalities (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). Students with low self-esteem were found to display characteristics indicative of learned helplessness. These included passivity, negative self-attitudes about performance, significantly lower initial estimates of success, less persistence, attribution of failures to lack of ability and of successes beyond personal control, and a decrease in expectancy of success following failure (Butkowsky & Willows, 1980).

Butkowsky and Willows (1980) noted that in the area of reading, extensive evidence has linked

negative self-perceptions and low levels of self-concept to low levels of performance and persistence on reading tasks. Pupils with relatively poor reading ability would have lower initial expectancies of success on reading tasks than pupils of relatively good or average ability even though they would have similar achievement potential.

Willig, Harnisch, Hill & Maehr (1983) also did research applying attribution theory to classroom motivation. They found a clear relationship between children's achievement and causal attributions for success and failure. Hiebert and Winograd (1984) found that in situations with a successful outcome, high achieving students attributed their success to ability and effort and their failure to a lack of effort or external causes. Low achieving children attributed their success to factors beyond their control such as luck or the difficulty of the task while attributing their failures to a lack of ability. The causes of success or failure usually cited were ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Hiebert, Winograd, 1984: Wiley & Eskilson, 1978).

Willig, et al. (1983) also noted the concern, within educational circles, with the disturbing fact that children outside the middle American mainstream

often suffered from debilitating negative motivation that interfered with academic performance and school progress. There was a great deal of research showing a negative relationship between test anxiety, school achievement, and test performance. Willig, et al. stated that highly test-anxious students generally showed negative attributions; success was due to luck and failure was due to lack of ability, or test difficulty.

Numerous studies summarized by Willig, et al. (1983) showed the motivation variables relevant to the success of many minority children were not necessarily to be found in the area of self-concept, anxiety and attributions, but in the area of incentive values and the perceived personal utility of academic work. Willig, et al., refuted studies that minority children had a more external locus of control and were more likely to contribute achievement outcomes to luck. Most researchers seemed to agree on most of their findings involving motivation and the student.

The second component addressed in this review concerned the teacher's role regarding motivation of intermediate students. Recent research indicated that teacher expectations were a powerful force affecting student performance. Such expectations often function

as self-fulfilling prophecies (Good & Brophy, 1980). TheodoreSizer (1985) noted the importance of attitudes -- the high expectations, mix of optimism and realism, and the infusion of these attitudes among teachers, students, and parents. The staff must believe that the students can learn. Sizer pointed out that the most powerful spurs for student's learning -- their motivation, the adaption of programs to their learning styles, the expectations for each of them were humanistic not mechanistic or programmatic.

Wiley and Eskilson (1978) also studied teacher expectations and found differences in teacher's reactions to children described as successful versus unsuccessful. Teacher's perceptions of pupil performance were likely to effect pupil's perceptions of personal competence.

Richards, Gaver, and Golicz (1984), on the other hand, cautioned educators against pressuring children into intellectual pursuits that may be contrary to their feelings, interest, and attitudes -- pursuits beyond their cognitive maturity. They pointed out that when performance lagged behind expectations by a wide margin, especially for underachieving children, systematic factors were surely responsible for the deficit. Among the many reasons for underachievement

was lack of interest in, or an apathetic attitude toward school subjects. Richards, et al., noted that the first symptoms of underachievement usually appeared about fourth grade. The adolescent period may be too late to attempt to change this dilemma.

Expectancy and feedback statements on the part of the teacher often occurred within the same instructional sequence; for example, a teacher made a prediction about a student's probability of success, the student performed, and then the teacher provided feedback about the actual degree of success (Gagne, Moore, Hauck & Hoy, 1979). There seemed to be interactive effects between these two types of motivation.

Gagne, et al., (1979) cited one possible interpretation of negative feedback which involved the arousal notion. For high-achieving students, the higher the arousal, the higher the performance. Fear of failure for them was more motivating than hope of success. Negative feedback simply informed the learner that performance was unacceptable, thus producing greater effort.

The process of setting goals was shown to be effective in improving student attitudes, performance, and learning. Kassens (1984) as well as Lipe and Jung

(1971) suggested student contracts as a method in goal setting, and increasing student interest. Students tended to take their work more seriously, however, children who were poorly motivated often needed tangible rewards when they met the requirements of their contract. Kohl (1979) suggested teacher techniques for working with the children who found it easier to fail than to try to succeed. He advocated giving the children the answers or doing the work for them rather than have them quit. The teacher's role needs to be one that strengthens and supports the students. Sometimes we have to make sure our students succeed instead of merely testing them to see if they have succeeded.

Cramer (1977) looked at the three main teacher concerns about teaching reading: motivation, reading comprehension, and vocabulary development. Teachers were very aware of many children's poor attitudes toward reading. Cramer suspected that with skill management systems, endless drills on phonics, criterion referenced competency testing and workbook exercises, we as educators may have missed the whole point of reading. He speculated whether or not we are in danger of producing a generation of unmotivated "reading haters" (p. 344).

Interest plays a significant role in motivating a child to read. Therefore there is definite value in learning the reading interest of children. More teachers need to capitalize upon these interests for reading instruction as well as to provide their students with a wider variety of reading materials. For example, it had been shown that low achievers preferred books with a comic strip format, although most teachers disapproved of this. Students overall preferred stories with humor, and most often selected fiction over non-fiction. Boys and girls usually expressed different interest in book selection. These facts are too often ignored by intermediate classroom teachers when selecting reading materials (Moray, 1978).

Saraceno & Piscitello (1973) are other authors who were concerned about the teacher's role in motivating students. They attempted to deal with a lack of emotional response to stories by capable but uninvolved readers. They included the children in the writing and production of a play. Praise encouraged the children to continue learning their lines and rehearsing. This was the reward that motivated the children.

John Zahorik (1982) researched teacher's perceptions of the nature and function of learning activities. The primary reason teacher's gave to activities being successful, such as games, problem solving, or construction, use of artifacts or objects, etc., is that they were motivational. They were interesting and attracted and maintained student attention. The main reason teachers gave to activities being unsuccessful such as recitation work, reading textbooks, and workbooks or test, was also motivation. Students were insufficiently motivated with these activities.

Zahorik (1982) found that teachers were concerned about motivation because they saw it as a prerequisite for learning. They seemed to feel that the cooperation that motivation created allowed the teacher to maintain classroom management. The teacher role in student motivation also involved feedback which was information that the teacher gave the student about the quality of his/her performance on a given task. However, Sadker and Sadker (1985), through observations, have shown classrooms to be bland and flat. Criticism and praise were found to be an unusual occurrence. The "okay" or "uh-huh" type of response was by far the most common. Remediation was

the second most common response, occurring in 99% of the classrooms. Acceptance was the most frequent teacher response. It accounted for more than all other responses involving criticism, praise, or remediation related to academic content.

Getsie, Langer, and Glass (1985) studied three combinations of feedback related to classroom situations. In general, reward compared to punishment or to reward plus punishment was the least efficient feedback. Reward plus punishment appeared to result in the best performance for middle and lower class children. This study found that verbal and symbolic feedback produced more rapid acquisition than did tangible feedback. Getsie, et al., concluded that feedback that served as informational function can directly affect motivation.

Reinforcement theory offered well researched and practical suggestions for teachers to follow in their effort to facilitate student motivation. One class of theory, as noted in research by Lipe and Jung (1971), focused on events outside the student and may be described as incentives to influence the student's performance. Lipe and Jung explained that incentive theories of motivation assume that behavior is largely activated by anticipation of reinforcing

consequences. For example, in producing intellectual strivings in children who display little interest in academic pursuits, one would arrange favorable conditions of reinforcement with respect to achievement behavior.

Clifford (1972) also researched the reinforcement theory. She stressed that extrinsic motivation such as punishment, threat, promises, praise, and blame was identified as that which may get a particular act going. It may even lead to the repetition of the act, but it does not nourish reliably the long course of learning. She agreed with many others that final emphasis must be placed on intrinsic motivation.

Clifford (1972) also reported evidence supporting competition as a motivator and cited the following: (a) Competition with a material reward is more satisfying, and (b) competition environment is preferred to the ambiguously competitive environment that permeates many classrooms. However, Clifford concluded that the value of using competitive motivation in the classroom is questionable whenever it involves improving performance in the more complex problem solving tasks.

The findings of this literature review provided implications that offered practical suggestions for

enhancing motivation in the classroom. In closing, the author will briefly examine these suggestions first from the role of the students, followed by those involving the teacher.

In regards to the self-concepts of our middle grade children it is important to note that children's achievement behavior may be altered by modifying their causal attributions of success and failure (Butkowsky & Willows, 1980). The strategy is to induce the children to change their attributions of failure from perceived lack of ability to perceived lack of effort. Not only must remedial efforts be directed at providing positively reinforcing success experiences for children with reading difficulties, they must also be directed at teaching these children to think more adaptively about their failures.

As researchers attempted to understand the role of motivation in children's reading performance, there was a continued need for attention to children's attributions for their failures and successes. Hiebert and Winograd (1984) noted that this is particularly the case in reading instruction, because reading capability provides the groundwork for performance in other school areas. Children's perceptions of their reading capability has a strong

influence on their failure and success in school settings.

Willig, et al., (1983) stressed the importance of developing instructional activities to facilitate positive motivation that are in accord with the motivational needs of the particular child. They strongly imply that the time has come to emphasize the development of educational programs that help students develop positive motivation and coping skills to eliminate the devastative effects of negative motivation in school.

There are strong implications derived from the importance of the role of the teacher. If certain children are subtly influenced in school to doubt their ability, this may have lasting effects not only on their causal attributions in academic settings, but also on their achievement orientation and eventual academic attainments (Wiley & Eskilson, 1978).

In noting the interactive effects between expectancy and feedback, Gagne, et al., (1979) found two situations in which a teacher might produce discrepancies and maintain credibility:

(a) With a student who is performing at a low level, high expectations could be given; and (b) with a

student who is performing at a high level, a low expectation could be given.

As teachers set goals for their students, Zahorik (1982) recommended that they plan activities that stimulate the student's interest and curiosity. They should involve them in projects and events. One important qualitative use of time in the classroom may be the motivation that certain types of learning activities create.

Teachers use of feedback also needs to be improved. The concern expressed by Sadker and Sadker (1985) was directed in the potential overuse of acceptance responses. The three implications of their study was that learning seemed to be strengthened when (a) students knew what was expected of them, (b) got recognition for their work, and (c) received help in improving their performance.

Lipe and Jung's (1971) research suggested that the setting of instruction needed to be restructured so that the students could learn. They endorsed the reinforcement theory and suggested that teachers consider the following types of incentives: (a) material incentives, (b) praise, and (c) knowledge of results. They noted that feedback was found to

produce more rapid learning than accumulating points for a toy or other material incentive.

This review of the literature related to motivation gives evidence of the numerous choices that teachers can make to better facilitate student motivation for learning. They should be aware of the various criteria involved while making their choices. Personal styles, situational demands, student differences, subject matter, and cultural values all need to be taken into consideration. Although there is no one best way to teach, there are better ways that deserve to be considered and applied for the benefit of all the students (Wlodkowski, 1986; Huston, 1987).

This literature review was interdisciplinary since it addressed several aspects related to motivation under various disciplines. Under the discipline of psychology, the researchers cited, stressed the need for achievement held by the human organism. They also noted the effect incentives had over performance. Failure must come to be viewed as a necessary component of the learning process.

Under the discipline of sociology, the selected researchers explored the effect of background on

achievement. Ethnic background was found to sometimes effect causal attributes.

The discipline of education was highlighted as the researchers expressed their concerns, and shared their findings related to bland and biased classrooms. Curriculum was another discipline included in the literature review. In this area the researchers examined the need to reconsider middle grade literature selections.

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

Motivation is an important factor that is present in school children who are working up to their potential. It is necessary to maintain and enhance this characteristic in all children if they are to be successful students. Therefore, the first goal of this practicum was to assist the teachers in planning activities that would improve student motivation, and increase student drive to work up to potential. The second goal was to enable the children to put forth the effort that would allow them to achieve at their expected level. The third goal was to improve the attendance, preparation, and self-discipline of the students and to accept this improvement as evidence of strengthened self-concepts.

Behavioral Expectations

Student motivation can have an effect on many areas of the school setting. Through planned activities it was believed that these various areas

would be improved. With this in mind, the writer chose the following behavioral objectives for this practicum.

1. Twenty-seven percent of the students receiving unsatisfactory grades in the major subject areas will be reduced, as evidenced on the student report cards, to 20%.
2. Thirty percent of students scoring below average on teacher-made tests will be reduced, as shown in the teacher's grade book, to 20% or better.
3. Sixty percent of the students will improve their attendance, as indicated by the teachers' attendance books, by at least 10%.
4. Twenty-two percent of the students referred to the principal's office for poor conduct, as evidenced on the student report cards, will be reduced to 15%.
5. Eighty percent of the students will come prepared for class, and do their homework at least 80% of the time as evidenced by teacher checklists and wall charts.
6. Eighty percent of the teachers will be able to list at least three new motivation techniques used in their classroom, on a teacher survey, with 80% accuracy.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

When one plans a project that is to take place for a period of three months, provisions must be made for

unexpected occurrences. In order to accommodate these occurrences, this writer kept a weekly log (see Appendix E) for each of the two schools participating in the program. The log described the degree of student improvement that occurred based on the motivation techniques used during the week. It also related any teacher or student concerns regarding the techniques being used. These logs were reviewed weekly in order to assess the progress of the teachers and students as well as to determine if any changes were necessary in the implementation of the techniques.

Measurement of Objectives

The first objective was measured by surveying the grades of each participating student's report cards. These cards were scheduled to be given out in December, which was the third month of this practicum. The writer concentrated on the kind of grades received in the major subject areas and tallied and recorded the number of below average grades for each grade as a whole (see Appendix A).

The second objective was measured by surveying the grades in the teachers' grade books related to teacher-made tests. Grades on end-of-unit tests or

chapter tests were of interest to the writer. Again, emphasis was placed on tests in the major subject areas. The writer tallied and recorded the number of below average grades for each grade as a whole (see Appendix B).

The third objective was measured by surveying the number of absences for each participating student as indicated in the teachers' attendance books. A table showing the percent of students with excellent, good, poor, and very poor attendance was compiled by the writer (see Appendix C).

The fourth objective was measured by calculating the amount of discipline referrals made to the office by each teacher during the time period of this practicum. These referrals were recorded by this writer in chart form. The chart was designed to show the number of children in each grade participating in this practicum and also the number of office referrals per grade (see Appendix D).

The fifth objective was measured by combining the information on the teacher's homework wall charts and preparation checklists. Each teacher designed a similar wall chart and posted it for the class to see. As the students showed their completed homework for the previous day, they received a star, smiley

face, etc. . . . on the wall chart. Again, the major subject areas were stressed. Checklists indicating which children, on a given day, were not prepared with paper, pencils, or books were kept at the teachers' desks. Routine monitoring of these checking devices was done by the writer. Near the end of the practicum, the writer recorded the information for the classes noting the number of students that did their homework and the number that came prepared (see Appendix F).

The final objective was measured by using written teacher surveys designed by the writer. These surveys contained several questions relating to the teacher's knowledge of motivation techniques (see Appendix G and H). A variety of techniques had been shared with the teachers during the weekly inservices. Therefore, it was expected that each teacher would be able to list at least three of these techniques that she used in her classroom (see Appendix H).

CHAPTER IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Motivation is a very important aspect of learning. A review of the literature disclosed a number of techniques that could be used by intermediate teachers which would enable them to enhance the motivation of their students. Teachers already used many of the techniques suggested in the literature, but it was often done in a haphazard, unplanned fashion. Frequently teachers were not aware of the impact that the various techniques could have if used at the appropriate time. If some of the suggested techniques were previously used in an unplanned manner, they may not have produced the desired result, and therefore their use of motivational techniques was the major aim of this practicum.

One possible solution to the lack of motivation in intermediate students was to have teachers become aware of children with success-oriented and failure-oriented personalities. This was imperative since a student's success in school is

strongly effected by his self-concept (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973: Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). There was a continued need for attention to children's attributions for their failures and successes. This was particularly the case in reading instruction, because reading capability provides the groundwork for performance in other school areas. Children's perceptions of their reading capabilities have a strong influence on their failure and success.

A second solution involved sharing information that would enable teachers to assist the students who displayed characteristics of learned helplessness. These students undoubtedly had low self-esteem. They exhibited characteristics such as passivity, negative self-attitudes about performance, significantly lower initial estimates of success, and had less persistence. They attributed failures to lack of ability, and they often had little expectancy of success (Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). Although the students may have had the necessary potential to learn, they would make little effort to try if these kinds of characteristics were not recognized. Teachers must make the effort to reassure the students and to reduce their negative feelings.

A third solution was supported by Richards, Gaver, and Golicz (1984) who stressed the need for intermediate grade teachers to make a concerted effort to renew the motivation present in most primary children. Their studies supported the findings that the first symptoms of underachievement often appear about fourth grade. The adolescent period may be too late to attempt to change this dilemma. Richards, et al. pointed out that among the many reasons for underachievement was lack of interest in, or an apathetic attitude toward school subjects. Teachers must avoid pressuring children into pursuits beyond their cognitive maturity. They should avoid planning lessons that are contrary to the student's feelings, interests, or attitudes.

A fourth solution involved the attribution theory. Willig, Harnisch, Hill, and Maehr (1983) found a clear relationship between children's achievement and causal attribution for success and failure. Hiebert and Winograd (1984) found that in situations with a successful outcome, high achieving students attributed their success to ability and effort and their failure to lack of effort or external causes. Low achieving children attributed their success to factors beyond their control such as luck

or the difficulty of the task while attributing their failures to a lack of ability. Willig, et al. also found a negative relationship between test anxiety, school achievement, and test performance. Highly test-anxious students generally showed negative attributions; success was due to luck and failure was due to lack of ability or test difficulty. Teachers needed to be made aware of the attribution theory so that they could design ways to make this theory work positively in their classrooms.

Another solution included the use of incentives as a motivational tool. Teachers had to determine the types of incentives that they felt enhanced the motivation in their classrooms. Incentives had sometimes been found to have a stronger effect on student motivation than did self-concept (Willig, Harnisch, Hill & Maehr, 1983). Getsie, Langer, and Glass (1985) however, found that verbal and symbolic feedback produced more rapid acquisition than did tangible incentives.

Teacher expectations had been found to be a powerful force in affecting student performance. Such expectations often functioned as self-fulfilling prophecies (Good & Brophy, 1980). TheodoreSizer (1985) stressed the importance of attitudes as an

incentive for students . . . high expectations along with a mix of optimism and realism. The teachers must believe that their students can learn. In order to spur students learning, Sizer suggested the adaption of programs to student's learning styles. The expectations for each of them should be humanistic not mechanistic or programmatic.

Another incentive for improving student's attitude, performance, and learning included the process of setting goals. Kassens (1984) as well as Lipe and Jung (1971) suggested student contracts as a method of setting goals. This writer may not advocate contracts, but would certainly stress the need for goal setting with the students. Contracts did not seem to be appropriate for the population participating in this practicum.

Feedback (Sadker & Sadker, 1985) was an important tool for giving children the incentive to work up to their potential. Instead of teachers responding with the routine "okay" or "uh-huh". They needed to make a concerted effort to use constructive criticism or praise when a student gave a reply.

Lipe and Jung (1971) and Clifford (1972) researched the use of the reinforcement theory as an incentive tool to influence the student's

performance. They suggested that the teacher arrange favorable conditions of reinforcement with respect to achievement. Although extrinsic motivation may get a particular act going, the final emphasis should be placed on intrinsic motivation.

These activities and suggestions became a part of this practicum. The degree of emphasis placed on each of the possible solutions varied depending on the attitudes of the participating teachers. However, this writer believed that each of the solutions would tend to increase the motivation of the students involved, and so would do whatever was necessary to encourage the teachers to understand and work through each solution at the appropriate time.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

The solution to the problem of intermediate children lacking the motivation necessary to be successful in school was based on the various techniques that have been described previously in this proposal. By using a blending of these techniques in a conscientious manner, the teachers attempted to enhance the motivation of their students. Each of these techniques were adapted to meet the needs of the students within the two schools participating in the

practicum. These techniques were selected because of the success cited in the research. This writer believed that this solution was appropriate for the problem found in this work setting.

This writer was prepared to try a variety of techniques which should have raised the level of motivation in the intermediate classroom. The first area of effort consisted of summarizing the five major solutions for the teachers. Teachers needed to be aware of the research findings regarding motivation if they were to approach this project with understanding.

Because six teachers from each of the two schools were participating in the project, this writer met weekly with each group. Wednesday had been set aside for school "A", and Friday had been scheduled for School "B". Meetings took place from 8:30 to 9:00 in the morning which had been designated by the Board of Education as the teacher's preparation period.

Each meeting concentrated on one of the previously selected techniques. Methods of implementing the designated technique were explored. Teachers began by reviewing the importance of the student's self-concept and its relationship to motivation (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). They were asked to

pay particular attention to opportunities during the week that enabled them to assist the student in strengthening his self-concept. A consideration of the possible effect that each activity had on a student's feeling of competence could have caused the teacher to alter the activity.

The second technique for enhancing motivation involved the teacher's understanding of learned helplessness which is often exhibited by underachievers (Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). When the teachers learned to recognize the characteristics related to learned helplessness they were able to reassure the students that they could succeed. Teachers could combat learned helplessness in their students in a variety of ways. The most productive route was to plan strategies so that a continuous motivational force was operating for maximum teaching results.

Based on the present literature, the author suggested that the teacher consider the following questions when planning her classroom activities:

- (a) What can I do to insure a positive student attitude during this activity?,
- (b) how can I best meet the needs of my students through this activity?,
- (c) what about the activity will continuously

stimulate my students?, (d) how is the affective or emotional climate for this activity a positive one for my students?, and (e) what is the reinforcement that this activity provides for my students? If teachers began to answer these questions while planning their lessons, students would increase their chances of being motivated to learn and would reduce their feelings of learned helplessness (Hiebert & Winograd, 1984).

The third solution involved renewing the enthusiasm that the children most likely had when they were in the primary grades (Richards, Gaver & Golicz, 1984). The teachers were asked to look closely at the kinds of lessons they were planning for the children. They were to ask themselves, "Are these lessons contrary to the children's feelings, interest, or attitudes?" If the answer was yes, they may have had to make drastic revisions in their plans.

Teachers came to understand the attribution theory and its effect on testing situations. By planning their lessons more appropriately, and making an attempt to have each child realize some degree of success, the teacher began to reduce the negative attributions which were evident in some of their

students (Willig, Harnisch, Hill & Maehr, 1983: Hiebert & Winograd, 1984).

Incentives played a major role in this practicum (Willig, Harnisch, Hill & Maehr, 1983: Getsie, Langer & Glass, 1985). Teachers were asked to highlight student successes by making charts, posters, checklists, etc. . . . so that the children could see their progress. Stickers or stars were used to indicate good attendance, high grades, preparedness, and completed homework. Teachers reviewed the importance of high expectations and were asked to let the children know that they were expecting only the best work from each of them (Good & Brophy, 1980). Teachers were also asked to plan realistic and purposeful goals, and to share these goals with the students (Kassens, 1984). By staying on task with their teaching they helped the children to also stay on task. Once the children began to see progress, their motivation should have increased.

Teachers reviewed the value of feedback, both when to give it and how to give it. They were then given time to practice this technique with their classes (Sadker & Sadker, 1985).

Finally, the reinforcement theory was reviewed. Teachers implemented this in their classrooms (Lipe & Jung, 1971; Clifford, 1972).

Each week, as the teachers met, they discussed their efforts of the previous week, and were then given a new motivating technique to implement. The techniques were reviewed and implemented according to the timeline.

This writer expected to obtain a commitment from the teachers stating they would make a concerted effort to implement the motivational techniques throughout their teaching day. Since implementation of these techniques was expected to be ongoing, the teacher should have found herself increasing her attempts to motivate the children. This writer intended to lend assistance as needed in making charts or posters, and in obtaining stickers or other tangible incentives.

This writer believed that the participating teachers would share her enthusiasm for the project. The majority of the teachers were concerned about the problem, and realized that many of our students were not working up to their potential. The goals for this practicum included more motivating activities planned by the teachers, and incentives that would encourage

the students to make more of an effort in school. This project seemed to successfully address these goals.

The particular techniques were carefully selected for a number of reasons. First, many children in this writer's work setting had low self-esteem. Often this problem continued to increase as the children withdrew more and more from school activities. Unfortunately, there was seldom anyone available who could understand what the child was going through, and intercede.

A second reason for selecting this solution was that children in the writer's work setting were suffering from learned helplessness (Hiebert & Winograd, 1984). They often had the potential, but for a variety of reasons no longer put forth the necessary effort. Thus, the children were falling further and further behind.

Finally, it had been this writer's experience that teachers did not always plan lessons that were appropriate to the work level or interest of the children. They also did not respond to the children in a way that encouraged the children to continue to put forth an effort.

Report of Action Taken

A variety of steps was taken in an effort to solve this problem. As a result, students in the middle grades in this school system were motivated to share in the responsibility for their actions.

Material such as charts and posters were prepared for the teachers to use as incentives. These motivated the students and thus bolstered their confidence. Students who exhibited learned helplessness were given guidance designed to foster success.

Participating teachers who taught middle grade children came to understand the need to utilize research based motivational techniques. They were helped to see that a conscious, consistent effort must be made in this direction. They were guided in devising methods of sharing appropriate expectations with their students. They were also encouraged to share the goals and objectives of their teaching with the class, and to "stay on task." These teachers were directed to vary their teaching strategies and their feedback. Finally, they were able to demonstrate to this writer the appropriate method of using the reinforcement theory.

The teachers were 12 in number. They were on staff in two schools in this school district. The time line for the implementation period was 12 weeks and teachers were expected to meet with this writer once each week for staff development.

The solution strategy began with an introductory meeting at each of the two schools. The teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Survey on Motivation Techniques which was designed by the writer (see Appendix G). The purpose of this survey was to enable the writer to gain insight into the teachers' understanding of motivation and its effect on student achievement.

Following completion of the teacher survey, an explanation of the project was given to the teachers along with a review of the literature on motivation. Emphasis was placed on the literature that dealt with success-oriented and failure-oriented personalities. Teachers were given the characteristics of these personalities, and asked to look at their own classes in terms of these characteristics. By doing so they should have begun to better understand their students. Data regarding attendance, grades, and discipline, previously collected by the writer, was shared with the teachers. The teachers were then

given perfect attendance wall charts as well as homework and preparation checklists which they were to begin using immediately.

The following meeting began with a discussion of the teachers' abilities to identify students who seem to be success or failure oriented. The teachers agreed that they did have students who exhibited these characteristics. They shared suggestions on how they were attempting to motivate these students. One teacher expressed her concerns related to the need for more effort in this area by the primary teachers. It was her feeling that if the children were not allowed to fall behind in the early years, the intermediate teachers would not encounter so many failure-oriented personalities. This discussion only served to make the project on motivation more necessary.

A second method enabling the teachers to help particular children overcome the tendency to rely on learned helplessness was introduced, and teachers were asked to pay particular attention to these children. It was important that they enable these children to recognize the rewards of their efforts, and not contribute their accomplishments to luck.

The introduction of a weekly log was included in the project at this time (see Appendix E). The

process of keeping a weekly log for each school was begun by the writer in order to summarize the motivational methods and suggested activities that were introduced weekly. The log also provided the writer with the opportunity to record specific positive or negative results as well as any concerns that might arise. The logs were invaluable as the project continued. They became helpful reference tools in planning future meetings.

At the next staff development meeting, the teachers reviewed what they had learned about success-oriented and failure-oriented personalities as well as the learned helplessness theory. They agreed to continue implementing these methods of increasing motivation. At this time they were also instructed on ways in which they could renew the motivation that was present in most of the students when they were in the primary grades. Several suggestions were embraced by the teachers such as (a) spell downs; (b) spelling quizzes consisting of five words each on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays; (c) read compositions to the class day; (d) periodically giving the students the answers so that they experience success; and (e) reminding children that their vocabulary should reflect their maturity. At the conclusion of this

meeting the teachers were given posters for recording high scores on tests based upon work in the major subject areas.

As the teachers met and shared their activities and techniques, their enthusiasm continued to grow. Not only were they receptive to methods and suggestions given by the writer, but they were interacting well with each other. They admitted that before this project, they rarely had an opportunity to meet and discuss teaching strategies.

Approximately one third of the way into the implementation period, the writer began observing the classrooms. It was noted that the charts for attendance and the grades were prominently displayed on the classroom walls. The students were obviously motivated by these charts and were eager to point to signs of their accomplishments. The teachers were observed using some of the techniques discussed. It was obvious that they were intent on raising their students' self-esteem by working to reduce the characteristic of learned helplessness.

During the next phase of the program, the attribution theory was introduced to the teachers along with ways to make this theory work positively in their classrooms. Teachers quickly saw the need to

understand this theory. It explained how high achieving students attribute their success to ability and effort while low achieving students often attribute their success to factors beyond their control such as luck or the difficulty of the test. Teachers were beginning to realize that it took more than just telling the students that they "had to do better." They were reminded to continue to "accentuate the positive" and to notice (a) when children came to school, (b) were prepared for class, and (c) had done their homework.

The teachers were reminded of the value of incentives when attempting to increase motivation. Most children respond favorably to a reward when they have acted responsibly. This writer provided smiley stickers to be used for academic achievements. The teachers shared the following incentive ideas; (a) positive comments on written assignments, (b) peer praise, (c) choices, (d) "fun" assignments such as puzzles and word searches, (e) free time, and (f) pizza parties.

The teachers continued to review the methods on motivation and to share their experiences. At this point, the writer urged the teachers to recognize the childrens' successes no matter how slight. Raising

the child's self-esteem comes with giving a sense of accomplishment. Book marks were given to the teachers to reward the children who improved in their class work.

Feedback was discussed as an important means of motivation. Constructive feedback was explained. The teachers were reminded that a "Very Good" on a paper is not as helpful to a student as "Very Good, You used complete sentences throughout your composition." Immediate feedback was also stressed as a way of showing the students that their work is important and meaningful.

The final technique, introduced during the implementation period, was the reinforcement theory. The teachers learned how to use both positive and negative reinforcement. They were asked to implement this theory in their classrooms as a means of improving discipline.

During the culminating meeting, the teachers completed a survey which was designed to demonstrate their growth related to motivation (see Appendix H). They shared their thoughts about this project. The following comments were heard: (a) Students are never too old for stars (wall charts), (b) immediate feedback works, (c) understanding learned

helplessness improved the self-concepts in my class, (d) reinforcement theory is one way to accentuate the positive, and (e) incentives are a part of my teaching again.

The final phase of the project was an evaluative one. The writer met with each of the two staffs to compile the information that each of them had gathered related to report card grades (see Appendix A), teacher-made tests (see Appendix B), attendance (see Appendix C), student conduct (see Appendix D), and preparation and homework results (see Appendix F).

CHAPTER V

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Results

Objective one was measured by comparing the intermediate report card grades received prior to the practicum with those obtained after the practicum. The chart containing this information may be found in Appendix A. The specific objective, "Twenty-six percent of the students receiving unsatisfactory grades in the major subject areas will be reduced, as evidenced on the students' report cards, to twenty percent," was met.

The fourth and fifth grades markedly improved the number of students that achieved passing grades in the major subjects. There was minimum improvement in the sixth grade (.1%) which was not significant in itself. However, a comparison of the report card grades prior to the practicum showed that the sixth grade had less students receiving unsatisfactory grades than did the other two levels from the start, and therefore less improvement was expected. When the three grades were combined the increase in the number of students exceeded the expected results by

3%. Teachers' effort in the use of feedback and their attempts at designing their lessons with the students' interest in mind may account for this degree of improvement.

Objective two was measured by comparing the grades received on teacher-made tests or end of unit tests prior to the practicum with those received after the practicum. The chart containing this information may be found in Appendix B. The specific objective, "Thirty percent of students scoring below average on teacher-made tests will be reduced, as shown in the teacher's grade book, to twenty percent or better," was within range. The final result was actually 21%. This decrease seemed reasonable to the writer for the amount of time allotted for this practicum.

Teachers were asked to consider end of chapter or unit tests for math, English, science, and social studies. These tests were a combination of those in the textbook and those made by the teacher.

Improvement was made at all three grade levels. The number of students receiving unsatisfactory test grades decreased by 9% after the practicum. The decrease was similar for all three grade levels. Again, feedback, noting childrens' interest, and the use of incentives were believed to have encouraged the

children to exert more effort in their daily work thus, allowing them to be better prepared for the test.

The teachers shared many ideas about their use of incentives and feedback during the practicum. They listened intently, not only to the writer, but to each other. This opportunity for the teachers to interact and share ideas was an unexpected result of the practicum. When teachers have a full teaching load and are on a closed campus schedule, they seldom interact with teachers other than their next door neighbors or personal friends. Now they were offering suggestions and giving advice on particular students that they had taught previously. The writer encouraged this type of atmosphere and sincerely hoped that it would continue upon conclusion of the practicum.

The third objective was measured by comparing the attendance for these students prior to the practicum with their attendance at the end of the 12 weeks. The chart containing this data may be found in Appendix C. The specific objective, "Sixty percent of the students will improve their attendance, as indicated by the teachers' attendance books by at least ten percent," was met. The writer believed that a 10%

increase was possible given the amount of time and the motivational techniques that were being used.

Forty percent of the students had perfect attendance both before and after the practicum. These were not necessarily the same students. The fact that the percentage was the same was, in the writer's opinion, an unexpected coincidence.

In looking at the other 60% of the students, the writer was most impressed with the decrease in the amount of students that had excessive absences. Prior to the practicum, 30% of the students had absences ranging from 10% of the time to more than 20%. (It was noted on Appendix C that this school system strived for 95% attendance by the students.) After the practicum the amount of students with excessive absences totaled 11%. Of the 60% of the students that were absent during the practicum, 49% fell into the excellent category with absences of 1%-9% of the time. This improvement of 19% exceeded the writer's objective of improving attendance by 10%.

Teachers put forth much effort in increasing the attendance in their classrooms. They put up attendance charts and encouraged the children to earn as many stars as possible. They marvelled at the amount of enthusiasm that was generated by the use of

these charts. Some thought that this activity was more for the primary children, but quickly changed their minds.

The fourth objective was measured by comparing the information involving referrals for poor conduct prior to the practicum with similar information collected after the practicum. The chart containing this information may be found in Appendix D. The specific objective, "Twenty-two percent of the students referred to the principal's office for poor conduct, as evidenced on the student report cards, will be reduced to fifteen percent," was met.

It should be noted here, that although the fifth grade had the largest number of children referred to the principal, this grade also had the largest population of students. The decrease in the percent of student referrals was most impressive among the sixth graders who only made up 4% of the 15% referred for poor conduct.

This overall reduction of 7% in conduct referrals was attributed by the teachers to their use of the reinforcement theory. By "accentuating the positive" teachers were able to lessen the rebellious attitudes that were sometimes found among this age group. The reinforcement theory offered well researched and

practical suggestions for teachers to follow in their effort to facilitate student motivation (Lipe & Jung, 1971).

The fifth objective was measured by comparing data collected prior to the practicum with similar information gathered by the teachers after the practicum took place. The chart containing this information may be found in Appendix F. The specific objective, "Eighty percent of the students will come prepared for class, and do their homework at least 80% of the time as evidenced by teacher checklists and wall charts," was met.

The writer believed that the motivational techniques that were utilized in the classrooms would encourage students to improve in these specific areas. Teachers made a conscientious effort to enhance the students' self-concepts, because a student's success in school is strongly effected by his self-concept. Students with low self-esteem, as researched by Butkowsky and Willows (1980), were found to display characteristics indicative of learned helplessness. These characteristics included passivity, negative self-attitudes about performance, lower estimates of success, less persistance, attribution of failures to lack of ability, and a

decrease in expectancy of success. In order to reduce these feelings common to many of the students, the teachers gave plenty of praise, arranged learning situations where children were successful, allowed the students to assist in planning the goals and expectations for the class, and devoted time to counseling the students. The teachers reported incidents where children began to lose their passivity, and show an interest in class activities as well as their individual progress. The writer was delighted to hear that the principal of one of the schools also got involved and began to commend the participants for their accomplishments. The teachers were encouraged to inform the principal of particular student achievements and then to send the student to the principal's office for some recognition.

It was the writer's intention to enhance the student's self-concepts by improving their school experiences. Based on this concept, the teachers were able to encourage the childrens' acceptance of responsibility for their actions. Doing homework and being prepared for class became an accepted part of the daily routine for most of the students.

Checklists and wall charts were provided as additional record keeping tools, as well as incentives

for the students. Teachers were asked to compile the data from their class checklists, and to indicate on specific students' report cards that the student was unprepared or without homework 21% or more of the time. This information allowed the writer to ascertain the degree of improvement in these two areas.

It was the writer's opinion that there was a particular need for this objective in the practicum. By looking at the information included in Appendix F, one can see that only 48% of the students were adequately prepared for class prior to the practicum, and very few of the children were doing their homework. Following the practicum, the percent of students meeting this objective exceeded the writer's goal of 80%. The most improvement was found among the fifth graders. Again, this is the largest group of children, but the results might also reinforce the research that shows that children often begin to show signs of underachievement in the intermediate grades. Among the many reasons for underachievement is lack of interest in, or an apathetic attitude toward school. The first symptoms of underachievement usually appear about fourth grade (Richards, Gaver & Golicz, 1984). If attempts are not made to reverse

this trend, the children continue to slip further as evidenced by these fifth graders. The adolescent period may be too late to attempt to change this dilemma (Richards, et al.). It was heartening for the writer to witness an apparent reversal of this trend during the practicum. The teachers' records indicated that 87% of the children were adequately prepared for class at least 80% of the time, and 82% of the children did their homework at least 80% of the time.

Data for the final objective directly involved the teachers. The specific objective, "Eighty percent of the teachers will be able to list at least three new motivation techniques used in their classroom on a teacher survey with 80% accuracy," was met. The charts containing this information may be found in Appendices G and H. The summary of the results may be found in Appendix I.

The growth of the teachers' knowledge related to motivation techniques was measured by administering a teacher survey both at the first and final staff development meeting. The writer expected the analysis of the completed surveys to show that at least 80% of the teachers would be able to list additional techniques that they had learned during the practicum, and that they had used in their classes. Knowledge of

these techniques was to have been derived from the weekly meetings involving the teachers and the writer.

The first question, "Do you feel that some of your students lack the motivation they need to work up to their potential?," was answered in the positive by all 12 of the teachers for both the pre and the post surveys. The second question, "What motivational techniques are you aware of," (pre-practicum), and "List three motivational techniques that were introduced to you during this practicum" (post-practicum), elicited responses citing many of the techniques covered. Appendix I relates to this question, because this was the one question that measured the extent to which the objective was met. The chart shows that before the practicum the teachers were well informed about the use of praise and incentives for motivating the students. However, only one teacher was able to list more than one technique and one other teacher was unable to list any. The result was one correct technique per teacher. Following the practicum, 100% of the teachers were able to list three new techniques that they had learned during the practicum. This total exceeded the writer's expected amount of 80%.

The third question, "What motivational techniques do you use in your class the most," drew a variety of responses from the teachers. During the practicum teachers continued to praise the children, however, due to their awareness of the attribution theory, they made sure the children recognized effort and not luck as being the key to their success. The other responses for this question included reinforcement theory and recognizing success-oriented and failure-oriented personalities. Again, praise and incentives were listed by a majority of the teachers prior to the practicum, but these teachers now felt that, due to the practicum, they had renewed their intentions in these areas, or they now approached the matter armed with the current research as to what worked best.

The fourth question asked the teachers what they had observed before and after the practicum related to their students' grades, attendance, preparation, etc. . . . On the pre-practicum survey, teachers noted that some students were always unprepared. They cited the connection between poor attendance, coming unprepared, and poor grades. On the post-practicum survey the teachers unanimously commented on the improvement that they had observed in their students.

They seemed to be very pleased with the effort put forth by the students. Several noted how instrumental the attendance wall charts were in motivating the children to come to school. Many recognized the fact that when children felt good about themselves they tended to do better in school. Others recognized the relationship between the teacher's selection of appropriate classroom activities, and the degree of student motivation. The teacher has to peak the students' curiosity and hold their interest if they are to remain motivated.

Question five on both pre and post practicum surveys addressed the belief that students can be and are now, motivated. Again, the response was a unanimous YES!

In conclusion, the staff development program designed to address the lack of motivation in intermediate grade children was a success. This was indicated by the results obtained from the comparisons of the pre and post data. However, a more heartening indication of the success of the program came from the teachers that participated in the weekly staff development meetings. Their cooperation, enthusiasm, and concern for the students was commendable. They felt that this project was very worthwhile, and that

it had definitely made a difference in their students. Perhaps that difference was the best indication of all.

Conclusions

All six of the objectives for this practicum either fell within the range of this writer's expectations or exceeded them. Objective one, which addressed report card grades in the major subject areas, exceeded the writer's goal by 3%. The fact that fewer students received unsatisfactory grades than were expected has a clear cut implication for intermediate teachers. The implication was that children in the intermediate grades are often not working up to their potential, and that by carefully planning the lessons, one could help the children to be more successful.

Objective two, which addressed grades on teacher-made tests, fell within the range of the writer's expectations. This was a difficult objective which drew heavily, not only on the students' level of motivation, but also on their level of study skills. It is the writer's opinion, that this objective may need more time in order to reduce the percentage of children receiving unsatisfactory grades. Students

who have gained strength in the other objectives will become better students. Therefore, it should follow that they will eventually begin to do better on the tests that the teachers plan for them.

The third objective involved the students' attendance. This objective far exceeded the writer's expectations. The results have strong implications for intermediate teachers. Students need to have a reason for coming to school. Some, at this age, can think up countless reasons for staying at home, and some, unfortunately, are kept at home for various reasons by their parents. By making school an enjoyable place to be, and by acknowledging good attendance, the teachers are helping to instill good habits in their students before it is too late.

The fourth and fifth objectives involved improving the students' discipline, preparation, and homework. The students' improvement in discipline met the writer's expectations. Their improvement in coming prepared and completing their homework exceeded the established guidelines. Perhaps the implications for both of these objectives was that students need to feel responsible for their actions. As the teachers repeatedly stated, these student responsibilities seem to hinge together. Students who are successful in

school are not usually discipline problems. Students who are not motivated, do not make an effort to work up to their potential, and frequently get into trouble. By providing successful learning situations for children, and by rewarding their accomplishments, teachers can increase the student's responsible attitudes.

The final objective, which addressed the teachers' knowledge of motivation techniques also exceeded the established guidelines. Before the practicum the teachers were asked to list the motivation techniques that they were aware of. Most of them could list one. After the practicum all 12 of the teachers were able to list three or more techniques that they had learned and had tried in their classes. The fact that all of the teachers benefitted from the practicum project has clear cut implications for other intermediate teachers. Through being informed and trying new techniques in the classroom, teachers can definitely help the students work up to their potential. By making student motivation a priority, teachers can plan their lessons and their classroom activities with goals and objectives that will strengthen this characteristic in their students.

In conclusion, this practicum project proved that a staff development program with intermediate grade teachers does help to address the problem of unmotivated intermediate grade children. The writer is enthused and inspired by the results achieved in this practicum. Therefore, the writer intends to use the suggestions and the findings derived from this practicum when working with other teachers in other schools. Now that it has been shown that addressing a lack of motivation can get very positive results, there is all the more reason to continue to encourage teachers of all grades to learn which techniques are right for them, and to use these techniques as often as possible.

Recommendations

The writer has four recommendations based on the results of this practicum. First, because this was a staff development program it should be remembered that the participating teachers must make a commitment to attend the meetings and to follow through on the suggested techniques in the classroom. Second, a variety of suggestions must be available so that teachers can use those that are suitable to their personalities. Rather than suggesting a spelling bee

as the method for motivating students to learn their spelling words, it is better to give alternative suggestions so that the teacher feels comfortable with her choice of an activity. Third, the writer found that it was important not to overburden the teachers with activities related to the practicum. Therefore, many of the materials that the teachers were asked to use were provided, such as wall charts, stars, and checklists. Incentives such as stickers, bookmarks, puzzles, etc. . . . were also given to the teachers. Teacher motivation was an important factor to consider. Finally, the teachers should have time during the meetings to interact with each other. They need to share ideas and experiences as well as offer suggestions to each other. They also need to know that they are not alone in the situations that they may encounter. Teachers who feel appreciated tend to put forth more effort. They are the central figure in a student's life, therefore, their impact should not be underestimated.

Dissemination

This practicum and its results are being shared in four ways. First, the writer's immediate supervisor, the district superintendent, was given a copy which

was then shared with the 21 principals within the writer's sub-district. This was done at a principals' meeting. Secondly, the writer has been invited to address the school system's psychologists at their spring meeting. The presentation will be an overview of this practicum and its results. Thirdly, the abstract and portions of the practicum report are scheduled to be published in the May issue of the Phi Delta Kappa Newsletter for the chapter in which this writer is a member. Finally, the writer will be available to assist others in planning a staff development program on student motivation.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Major Subject Report Card Grades

Year in School	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades Before Practicum	Percent of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades Before Practicum	Number of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades After Practicum	Percent of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades After Practicum
4	86	28	28	9	13	4
5	121	40	29	10	16	5
6	94	32	25	8	23	8
Total	301	100	82	27	52	17

Appendix B

Teacher Made Test Grades

Year in School	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades Before Practicum	Percent of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades Before Practicum	Number of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades After Practicum	Percent of Students With Unsatisfactory Grades After Practicum
4	86	28	30	10	22	7
5	121	40	32	11	24	8
6	94	32	28	9	20	6
Total	301	100	90	30	66	21

Appendix C

Attendance

Percent of days Absent	Percent of Intermediate Students Absent Before Practicum	Percent of Intermediate Students Absent After Practicum
1%-9% (excellent)	30	49%
10%-14% (good)	15	7%
15%-19% (poor)	6	2%
20% --- (very poor)	9	2%
Total	60%	60%

Note: 95% attendance is considered superior by this school system.

Appendix D

Student Conduct

Grade	Number of Students Participating in Practicum	Percent of Students Participating in Practicum	Number of Students With Discipline Referrals Before Practicum	Percent of Students With Discipline Referrals Before Practicum	Number of Students With Discipline Referrals After Practicum	Percent of Students With Discipline Referrals After Practicum
4	86	29	15	5	9	3
5	121	40	29	10	24	8
6	94	31	21	7	12	4
Total	301	100	65	22	45	15

Appendix E

Writer's Weekly Log

School _____ Room _____ Grade _____ Week _____

Motivational method introduced in class:

Positive results noted:

Negative results noted:

Teacher concerns or questions:

Student concerns or questions:

Appendix F

Preparation and Homework

Grade	Number of Students in Class	Percent of Students Prepared at Least 80% of the Allotted Time		Percent of Students With Completed Homework 80% of the Allotted Time	
		Before	After	Before	After
4	86	11	23	5	23%
5	121	17	43	10	31%
6	94	20	21	+3	28%
Total	301	48%	87%	28%	82%

Appendix G

(Pre-Practicum)

Teacher Survey on Motivation Techniques

1. Do you feel that some of your students lack the motivation that they need to work up to their potential _____, Why?
2. What motivational techniques are you aware of?
3. What motivational technique do you use in your class the most?
4. What have you observed among your students related to grades, attendance preparation, etc. . . . ?
Explain --
5. Do you feel that it is possible to motivate your students to work up to their potential?

Appendix H

(Post-Practicum)

Teacher Survey on Motivation Techniques

1. Do you feel that there was a lack of motivation among your students before this practicum?
_____ Why?
2. List three motivational techniques that were introduced to you during this practicum.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Which technique was most useful in your class?

Explain.
4. What improvements have you observed among your students? (e.g., grades, attendance, preparation)

Explain.

5. Do you now feel that your students are more
motivated to work up to their potential? _____

Why?

Appendix I

Results of Teacher Surveys on Motivation Techniques

Question 2*

Teacher	Before Practicum (1 answer per teacher)	After Practicum (3 additional answers per teacher)
1	poor self-concept	learned helplessness feedback incentives
2	praise	rewards feedback motivational activities
3	incentives	rewards feedback learned helplessness
4	incentives praise	feedback motivational activities attribution theory
5	praise	rewards motivational activities success/failure- oriented personalities
6	none	incentives success/failure- oriented personalities
7	positive reinforce feedback	feedback learned helplessness attribution theory incentives

Teacher	Before Practicum (1 answer per teacher)	After Practicum (3 additional answers per teacher)
8	rewards	incentives self-concept feedback
9	praise	reinforcement theory success/failure- oriented personalities incentives
10	motivational activities	reinforcement theory learned helplessness feedback
11	attribution theory	feedback self-concept reinforcement theory
12	positive reinforcement	learned helplessness feedback reinforcement theory

* Answers for question 2 were tallied because the answers were used to measure the degree to which objective 6 was met.